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## **RACING MEETS THE ARTS TO KICK OFF DERBY WEEK ON ‘OPENING NIGHT’**

### **Features Live Arts Performances Throughout Racetrack and the Third Annual William Walker Stakes**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Monday, April 24, 2017)** – For the second year, Churchill Downs and Fund for the Arts will launch Derby week together with a celebration of local arts and live racing at Opening Night presented by Stella Artois and Old Forester. Louisville’s favorite night racing party will take place next Saturday, April 29 and feature live arts performances throughout the track and the third annual William Walker Stakes. A portion of the evening’s proceeds will benefit the Fund for the Arts.

More than 150 local artists will participate in more than 20 live performances throughout the track and on Churchill Downs’ Big Board including the region’s favorite artists and performers in music, dance, fashion, visual arts, among others. They include the Kentucky Opera; interactive drum circle Strive; D.E.S.T.I.N.E.D. Dance Company; interactive media artists Amazing Robot & Sons; and urban graffiti muralist Casey McKinney. For a full list, visit <https://www.kentuckyderby.com/visit/derby-week>.

During the evening, the Fund for the Arts, the Jennifer Lawrence Foundation and Churchill Downs will present Louisville’s second annual Award in the Arts presented by Delta Dental of Kentucky and Joy Mangano, a separate sold out ticketed benefit event in the Stakes Room to celebrate recognized local artists and arts organizations, including Academy Award winner Stephen Gaghan and Madame Secretary star Tim Daly, among others. The seven award recipients will be featured on the Big Board during the evening.

The highlight of the evening’s 11 races is the third annual running of the \$100,000 William Walker Stakes, a six-furlong sprint for 3-year-olds. The race honors William “Billy” Walker Sr., one of Churchill Downs’ leading riders and trainers who was an accomplished expert on breeding and bloodlines for 25 years. The African American jockey guided Derby winner Baden-Baden to a two-length victory in 1877 and advised the breeder of five Derby winners, three Hall of Famers and Triple Crown-Winner, Sir Barton (1919).

Opening Night is the first event of Churchill Downs Racetrack’s 2017 Spring Meet, which ends with a Downs After Dark night racing event on Friday, June 30.

General Admission is \$10 and covered Third Floor Clubhouse Box seats are \$20 and available at [www.ChurchillDowns.com/tickets](http://www.ChurchillDowns.com/tickets). Indoor dining remains in the Triple Crown Room at \$125 and includes buffet and four hour bar package. To purchase indoor dining tickets call 502-636-4450. Gates open at 5:00 p.m. with first post at 6:00 p.m. Recommended attire is Dress to Impress cocktail with fashionable headwear.

#### **About Churchill Downs Racetrack**

Churchill Downs Racetrack, the world’s most legendary racetrack, has conducted Thoroughbred racing and presented America’s greatest race the Kentucky Derby continuously since 1875. Located in Louisville, the flagship racetrack of Churchill Downs Incorporated (NASDAQ: CHDN) offers year-round simulcast wagering at the historic track. Churchill Downs will conduct the 143rd running of the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands on May 6, 2017. The track’s 2017 Spring Meet is scheduled for April 29-June 30. The track has hosted the Breeders’ Cup World Championships eight times and is scheduled to host again in 2018. [www.churchilldowns.com](http://www.churchilldowns.com).

The Jennifer Lawrence Foundation is a component fund of the Community Foundation of Louisville.

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